

Recommendations from Discovering Ontario: A Report on the Future of Tourism (2009 Competitiveness Study/Sorbara Report)

I. Change how government and industry work together to develop tourism and foster economic growth.

1. **Set targets:** Ontario should set its sights on becoming one of the world's preferred destinations. It has the potential and all the necessary elements it needs to be a leading global destination. By 2020, Ontario will aim to increase the economic contribution of the sector by doubling tourism receipts.
2. **Establish regions:** Ontario should establish tourism regions to better coordinate tourism marketing and management across the province. Each region should work towards creating a unique brand and a stellar experience within a provincial brand. There should be one Destination Marketing and Management Organization for each region.
3. **Regularize destination marketing fees:** To help support expanded regional tourism marketing and management efforts, Ontario should standardize Destination Marketing Fees (a fee on the room portion of a guest bill across the province).
4. **Encourage a single tourism industry association:** The tourism industry should establish one effective and adequately resourced umbrella association to represent the needs of the entire industry. It should reflect the diversity of the industry across the province.
5. **Open our doors:** Ontario should advocate for the federal government to improve access to international markets, reduce barriers for entry into the province and overall, make it easier for tourist to get here.

II. Set new standards for success to become more internationally competitive.

6. **Encourage leadership:** For Ontario's tourism industry to fulfill its potential as a destination, and as a contributor to the economy, it needs a highly visible and sustained commitment from the Premier and Cabinet.
7. **Modernize regulations:** To encourage economic development, the ministry should work with industry to identify, reduce or eliminate key impediments.
8. **Establish service and quality standards:** In order to encourage a service culture in Ontario, the industry should adopt a service quality strategy to meet tourists' expectations for high service standards.
9. **Develop the tourism workforce:** Ontario should work to become an international leader in tourism training and education.

III. Maximize the impact of private and public tourism investments on new and revitalized product across Ontario.

10. **Invest in transportation infrastructure:** Ontario should improve access to existing attractions focusing on links that make it easier to get from one region to the next. Tourism transportation funding should focus on movement in and out of key gateways or high-draw areas.
11. **Actively attract investment:** The Ontario government should identify its high-potential destinations for investment. It should undertake a campaign to target investors, provide selective incentives and make it easier to work with governments.
12. **Help operators access capital:** Ontario should help support loans and/or loan guarantees to small- and medium-sized tourism operators by working with existing lenders.
13. **Transform our attractions:** Ontario should continue to invest in its own tourism and cultural attractions, provincial parks and trails to bring them up in leading global standards.
14. **Revitalize Ontario Place:** Ontario should revitalize Ontario Place as the flagship of a new era in Ontario tourism by opening it all year, developing a master plan that includes the surrounding area and investing in local infrastructure.
15. **Cultivate festivals and events:** Ontario should strategically invest in major festivals and events with the highest potential for growth in terms of total tourist expenditures. This would help to raise the profile of Ontario and capitalize on the province's strong product offering and natural assets, culture and the arts, key economic clusters and sports infrastructures.

IV. Welcome consumers before they arrive, when they get here and during their visit in Ontario.

16. **Redesign marketing role:** Recast Ontario's approach to tourism marketing so that one agency becomes the provincial marketing lead for promoting the provincial tourism brand in partnership with the new tourism regions.
17. **Market strategically:** Ontario should market its destinations and experiences by focusing on our strongest existing international markets; prioritizing new and best-prospect markets like Mexico, Brazil, India, and China; strengthening our appeal to French-speaking markets, especially Quebec; expanding our reach to new Canadians and their families; and continuing to focus on the strong domestic Ontario market.
18. **Focus on our unique products:** Ontario should focus on the unique product offerings of regions including natural experiences and our great water assets as well as niche tourism experiences such as sports, cultural, culinary, eco and agricultural tourism.

19. **Improve way-finding:** Ontario needs better signage to help make the province more welcoming, safe, and comfortable.

20. **Increase e-marketing and online booking:** The industry should increase internet marketing and online booking capabilities. Through its marketing agency, the Ontario government should work with industry to make it easier for consumers to book accommodations and visit attractions.